

Message Text

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SUBJECT: NSF/SFCP. VISIT OF NSF DIRECTOR RICHARD ATKINSON

1. NSF OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION HAS PREPARED THE FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE FOR SCIENCE WRITERS AND EDITORS. BEGIN QUOTE: DR. RICHARD ATKINSON, DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (NSF), WILL PRESENT THE MAIN ADDRESS AT THE FORMAL OPENING OF THE COPERNICUS ASTRONOMICAL CENTER IN WARSAW, POLAND, MAY 24. THE COPERNICUS ASTRONOMICAL CENTER, STARTED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF AN NSF GRANT IN 1973, FORMS THE BASIS FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN POLISH AND FOREIGN ASTRONOMERS.

AS GUEST OF DR. SYLWESTER (CQ) KALISKI, POLAND'S MINISTER FOR SCIENCE, HIGHER EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY, DR. ATKINSON WILL SPEND FIVE DAYS (MAY 22 THROUGH MAY 26) IN POLAND DISCUSSING THE PRESENT STATE OF NSF-POLISH SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION.
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TION, AS WELL AS THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF MUTUAL RESEARCH.

OTHER U.S. SCIENTISTS AND ADMINISTRATORS AT THE OPENING CEREMONIES WILL INCLUDE DR. PHILIP HANDLER, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES; DR. C.R. O'DELL, THE U.S. COOPERATING SCIENTIST FROM THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION; DR. HARVEY AVERCH, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

FOR NSF'S DIRECTORATE FOR SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL, AND

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS; AND DR. WILLIAM E. HOWARD, III,
NSF'S DIVISION DIRECTOR FOR ASTRONOMICAL SCIENCES END QUOTE.

2. NSF WOULD WELCOME EMBASSY AND POLISH PRESS COVERAGE OF
ATKINSON'S VISIT.

3. PERTINENT BIO-DATA FOR ATKINSON IS AS FOLLOWS:

DR. RICHARD C. ATKINSON WAS SWORN IN BEFORE PRESIDENT
CARTER ON JUNE 1, 1977, AS DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE
FOUNDATION. HE WAS NOMINATED FOR THE POSITION BY PRESIDENT
CARTER ON APRIL 21, 1977, AND UNANIMOUSLY CONFIRMED BY THE
SENATE ON MAY 3, 1977. DR. ATKINSON HAS BEEN ACTING
DIRECTOR AT THE FOUNDATION SINCE AUGUST 12, 1976. HE
IS ON LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM STANFORD UNIVERSITY WHERE HE
HAD BEEN ON THE FACULTY SINCE 1956.

DR. ATKINSON IS AN EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGIST AND APPLIED
MATHEMATICIAN WHOSE RESEARCH HAS BEEN CONCERNED WITH EX-
PERIMENTAL AND THEORETICAL ANALYSES OF MEMORY AND COGNITION.
HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO TRANSFORM INTUITIVE IDEAS ABOUT
THE NATURE OF MEMORY INTO AN EXPLICIT THEORY THAT COULD BE
FORMULATED IN MATHEMATICAL TERMS. THIS THEORY HAS BEEN THE
BASIS FOR MUCH OF THE CURRENT RESEARCH ON HUMAN MEMORY.
THE THEORY ALSO HAS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN SPECIFY-
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ING CORRELATES BETWEEN BRAIN STRUCTURES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
PHENOMENA, IN EXPLAINING THE EFFECTS OF DRUGS ON MEMORY,
AND IN PROVIDING TECHNIQUES FOR OPTIMIZING THE LEARNING
PROCESS.

DR. ATKINSON'S RESEARCH ON MEMORY HAS LED HIM TO BE CON-
CERNED WITH PROBLEMS OF CLASSROOM LEARNING. HE WAS AMONG
THE FIRST TO DEVELOP A COMPUTER-CONTROLLED SYSTEM FOR IN-
STRUCTION, WHOSE BASIC FEATURES HAVE HAD WIDE INFLUENCE ON
THE COMPUTER FIELD AND HAVE BEEN USED IN THE DESIGN OF COM-
MERCIAL COMPUTER-ASSISTED INSTRUCTION PROGRAMS. AN
IMPORTANT APPLICATION OF THE COMPUTER SYSTEM DEVELOPED BY
DR. ATKINSON HAS BEEN FOR TEACHING READING TO ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL CHILDREN. THE SYSTEM IS HIGHLY ADAPTIVE AND
DEPENDS ON A MATHEMATICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE STUDENT'S
LEARNING PROCESS THAT IS OPTIMIZED USING CONTROL THEORY
METHODS.

DR. ATKINSON WAS BORN MARCH 19, 1929, IN OAK PARK, ILLINOIS.
HE EARNED A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE AT THE UNIVERSITY
OF CHICAGO IN 1948, AND A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE AT
INDIANA UNIVERSITY IN 1955. HE HAS BEEN ELECTED TO MEMBER-

SHIP IN THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, THE AMERICAN
ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF

EDUCATION, AND THE SOCIETY OF EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGISTS.
HE HAS BEEN A FELLOW OF THE CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDY IN
THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES, A FELLOW OF THE GUGGENHEIM
FOUNDATION, A RECIPIENT OF THE DISTINGUISHED RESEARCH
AWARD FROM THE SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH COUNCIL, AND THE
DISTINGUISHED SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTION AWARD OF THE
AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.

DR. ATKINSON JOINED THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY FACULTY IN
1956 AFTER MILITARY SERVICE IN THE U.S. ARMY. EXCEPT FOR
THREE YEARS AT UCLA AND ONE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN,
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HE HAS BEEN AT STANFORD EVER SINCE. HE SERVED AS CHAIRMAN
OF THE PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT FROM 1968 TO 1973, AND AS A
DEAN IN THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES FROM 1973 TO
1975. IN ADDITION TO BEING A PROFESSOR IN THE PSYCHOLOGY
DEPARTMENT, HE HOLDS APPOINTMENTS IN THE SCHOOL OF ENGI-
NEERING, THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, AND THE INSTITUTE FOR
MATHEMATICAL STUDIES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES.

DR. ATKINSON IS THE AUTHOR OR EDITOR OF TEN BOOKS, AUTHOR
OR CO-AUTHOR OF MORE THAN 100 PROFESSIONAL PAPERS. VANCE

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